

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Two universities of world standing sign up to help deliver new futures in regional communities

The promise of regional communities rebuilt around knowledge and learning has united two universities of world standing.

The University of Tasmania and University of Melbourne today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will lead to closer research and teaching ties, and the evaluation of impacts if transformation plans in the island state are realised.

Bold proposals being pursued by the University of Tasmania and its partners include the relocation of regional campuses to modern inner-city locations, a contemporary curriculum which aligns with the needs of key industries and new pathways within the University and between universities.

In a joint statement, University of Tasmania Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Rathjen and University of Melbourne Vice-Chancellor Professor Glyn Davis said:

“If Australia is to truly put innovation at the heart of its economic future, we must put universities at the heart of our communities.

“Economic transition requires intellectual property and human capital - both products of a university system.

“An historic consensus has emerged in Tasmania that the answer to many of the questions about the island state’s future lies in producing better educational outcomes for its citizens.

“With partners, including the State Government, there is promise in taking these principles and building a bridge between communities of high unemployment and industries seeking a more skilled, industry-focused workforce.

“As the only university at service in its island home, the University of Tasmania has an unparalleled level of social responsibility to drive social and economic change

through education in the State.

“But Tasmania is not alone in this – many regions across Australia are struggling with the transition from an economy rooted in traditional, lower-skilled industries to economies built upon on knowledge, innovation and entrepreneurship.

“This requires a higher education system that supports increased participation, often by people from non-traditional backgrounds; outstanding research linked to innovation and industry development; and skills and knowledge that are matched to an economy in transition.

“Tasmania is the ideal test bed for a set of ideas which might well be applicable elsewhere. It is small enough to make evaluation possible, but complex enough to make it meaningful.

“As one of the country’s finest universities, the University of Melbourne has centres of excellence which are ideally placed to work with the University of Tasmania and its partners. The University of Melbourne will provide expert advice on system design and independent measurement of outcomes across time.

“The University of Melbourne has considerable expertise in and understanding of the public policy changes necessary to bring about the transformative power of education and research.

“There is a unique opportunity in Tasmania to model solutions and evaluate them, so that the outcomes can be shared and influence policy.”

University of Melbourne involvement in the collaboration will include the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education, the LH Martin Institute and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education.